New South Western Railway Zone

800. SHRI C.P. MUDALA GIRIYAPPA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether tha South Western Railway Zone has been set up with its head Office at Bangalore;

(b) if so, the date from which this zona started functioning;

(c) the details thereof including the areas the fall under this zone;

(d) whether preference would be given to the local people while making recruitment for this zone; and

(e) if so, the precise policy to be followed in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) No, Sir. The matter has not been finalised so far.

(b) to (e). Do not arise.

Forest Area in Rajasthan

[*Translation*]

801. SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the area of Rajasthan earmarked for forest and the area out of it having no forest on it;

(b) whether the area having no forest is desert area thereby causing adverse effect on the environment;

(c) if so, the steps proposed to be taken for afforestation of barren land earmarked as forest area;

(d) whether there is any proposal to bring more area in Rajasthan under forest cover to check arid conditions;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefore?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) According to the State of Forest Report 1989, the total extent of recorded forest area of Rajasthan is 3.11 million hectares, and the area under actual forest cover is 1.29 million hectares.

(b) The areas having no forest are not entirely desert; also there is not data to establish conclusively that natural desert areas have an adverse effect on ecology, from e macro-environmental point of view.

(c) Massive afforestation and pasture development works have been lauched in order to develop forests.

(d) to (f). The following steps are being taken to bring more and more areas under tree cover in Rajasthan.

(1) Afforestation works are being carried out on non-forest lands along railway lines, roads, canal embankments, revenue wasteland & Panchayat lands.

(2)Distribution of seedlings free of cost to all government organisations and at nominal prices to farmers and non-governmental organisations.

(3) Communication and extension network is strengthened to motivate masses for planting more and more trees on follow lands.

(4) Green Rajasthan Programme has

been initiated from this year.

Soil Erosion in Rajasthan

802. SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No. 3346 on August 19, 1991 regarding soil erosion in Rajasthan and State:

(a) whether the information has since been collected;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefore?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) to (c). The information sought from the State Government of Rajasthan is still awaited. This will be laid on the Table of the House after its receipt from the State Government.

Area Under Sand Dunes in Rajasthan

830. SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the sand from the deserts of Wasa-Ranauli, district Sikar to Pisagan-Govindgarh district Ajmer and other hilly regions has formed dunes upto Jaipur city and in the region of Pushkar valley; and

(b) if so, the area in square kilometres in which these dunes have been formed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b). There is no conclusive evidence that the sand dunes near Jaipur and in Pushkar Valley have been caused by the spread of desert towards these places in recent times.

Development of Ajmer District

804. SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether a programme to develop Ajmer District of Rajasthan on priority basis was included in the Seventh Five Year Plan;

(b) if so, the details of the development works undertaken in this district; and

(c) whether clearance has been obtained from concerned authorities for maintaining environmental and ecological balance while developing Ajmer and constructing Yatri Niwas there?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) and (b). Development of tourism is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments. However, the Central Department of Tourism extends financial assistance on specific proposals received from State Governments and depending upon their merits, inter-se priority and availability of funds. during the Seventh Plan period, the following projects were sanctioned in Ajmer District:-

(i) Improvement and modification of Indira Ghat and Karnighat at Pushkar.

(ii) Tourist complex at Pushkar.

(c) The State Governments, being implementing agencies, are required to obtain necessary clearances before implementing tourism projects.